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TEENAGE CIGARETTE SMOKING SELF TEST

AND DISCUSSION LEADER'S GUIDE

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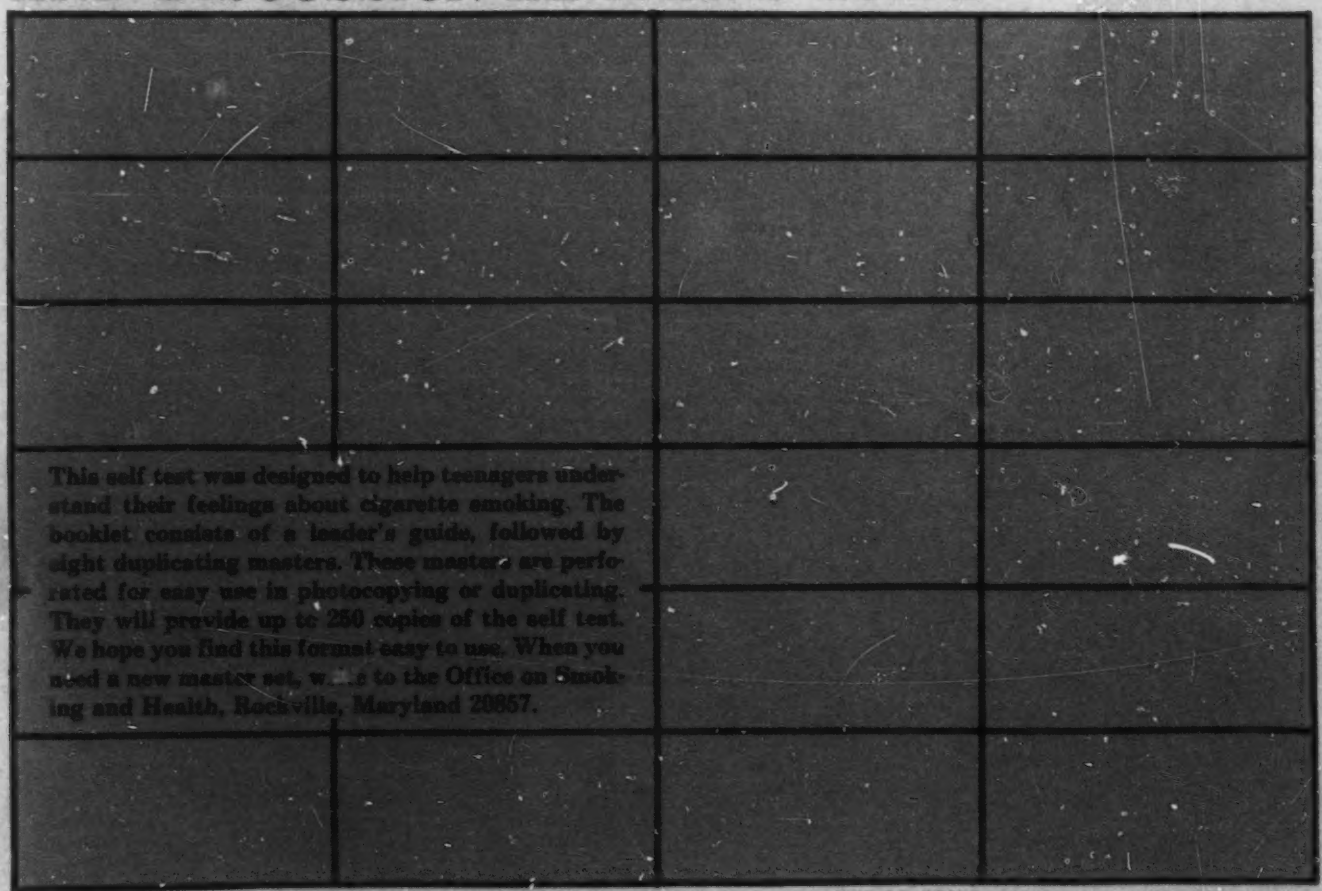

This self test was designed to help teenagers understand their feelings about cigarette smoking. The booklet consists of a leader's guide, followed by eight duplicating masters. These masters are perforated for easy use in photocopying or duplicating. They will provide up to 250 copies of the self test. We hope you find this format easy to use. When you need a new master set, write to the Office on Smoking and Health, Rockville, Maryland 20857.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • Public Health Service PHS 82-50189

HE20.8:

Contents

Discussion Leader's Guide 1-4

Test 1 5

Test 2 7

What Do Other People Think About Smoking? 9

What's So Bad About Smoking, Anyway? 10

Additional Resources . . . . . Inside Back Cover

Contents

Discussion Leader's Guide **1-4**

Test 1 ..... **5**

Test 2 ..... **7**

What Do Other People Think About Smoking? **9**

What's So Bad About Smoking, Anyway? **10**

Additional Resources ..... **Inside Back Cover**

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HE20.8:

Teenage Cigarette Smoking Self Test

Discussion Leader's Guide

Although most teenagers are well aware of the harmful effects of cigarette smoking, and fewer teenagers are beginning to smoke today than in the past, a large number of them are still taking up the habit every year.

Many young people never make a decision to become smokers, or not to become smokers, but simply drift into smoking behavior. Teenagers need to take the time to become informed in order to make a thoughtful decision about smoking. The Self Test allows the teenager to explore his or her own knowledge of the health effects of smoking, feelings about smokers, and views on why people begin smoking.

There are three ways in which the Self Test has proved useful in the past: (1) as a self-administered, self-scored tool; (2) as a basis for group discussion; and (3) for research purposes. Each of these is discussed below.

Self-Administered

The Self Test was designed primarily as a means by which a teenager can learn more about cigarette smoking, and how it might affect him or her—physically, socially, and psychologically. Teenagers have a number of misconceptions about cigarette smoking; for example, there is a tendency to grossly overestimate the number of smokers in the population (both teenage and adult); many believe that smoking will make them more popular; some think it's all right to experiment with cigarettes—that they can easily quit before it becomes a habit. This kind of misinformation, if not corrected, can lead a teenager into becoming a smoker before he or she has made an informed decision about it.

The teenager who takes the Self Test individually, outside of a group setting, should be encouraged to take the test at a time and a place conducive to thoughtful reflection. The test should be filled out in one sitting, so that it is completed without discussions with others. If teenagers discuss the content of the test, or listen to the opinions of others, the attitudes they report may not be totally their own.

Those who take the Self Test should never be put under pressure to reveal their scores. The teacher should never, for example, ask the students to hand in their tests. Parents should not look over the shoulders of their children. Such pressure will make the Self Test totally ineffective. A teenager may, however, want to discuss his or her responses or scores with someone, preferably a well-informed adult.

Group Discussion

Teachers and other leaders of youth groups often find it difficult to get a discussion of cigarette smoking started. Teenagers feel that they already know everything they need to know, and they are prepared for a canned lecture on the evils of smoking. The Self Test, developed with teenagers for teenagers, can serve to overcome this problem to some extent. It can stimulate discussion focusing the teenagers' attention upon themselves, and helping them to see similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Preparing for the Discussion. If you are not familiar with the effects of cigarette smoking on the human body, you should learn some of the basic facts. You are likely to be asked questions about the *specific* ways in which smoking is harmful, so it is not enough to know that smoking is injurious to one's health. Some of the needed information is available on the last two pages of the Self Test.

Another type of question that may arise concerns the prevalence of smoking. Not only are young people likely to want to know how many teenagers, and how many adults, are cigarette smokers, they will probably ask questions about *who* is still smoking. What are the characteristics of teenage smokers? How do they differ from those of teenage nonsmokers? The same questions are likely to be asked about adults.

It is extremely useful for you to become familiar with the test by filling it out yourself, trying to think of yourself as a teenager. Obtain your scores, and read the interpretation. This will give you an

understanding of the kinds of insights that can be gained through the Self Test.

In addition to preparing yourself with adequate facts about smoking, it is also important to prepare yourself to take a nonjudgmental stance on the subject of smoking. No matter what your own views are, they must be subordinated for this discussion. An effective leader should make every effort to help teenagers make their own informed decisions.

Administration of the Self Test. The test should be administered in a room that is free from noise and distraction, with a place for everyone to write comfortably. If possible, chairs should be placed sufficiently far apart for privacy.

Assure the respondents that no one will ever know how they responded to any of the statements, that the test is for their own use only, and that the tests will not be collected. Also, they should be told that there are no right or wrong answers, that there is no "good" score or "poor" score. Encourage them to give frank opinions, so that the scores will be meaningful and useful.

Ask the group to read the instructions at the top of Test 1. Explain that each individual is to answer according to his or her own attitudes; therefore, no one should talk while taking the test. Ask each person to fill out his or her own test independently, explaining that discussion time will follow.

While the respondents are filling out the test, make sure that they are following instructions properly. If questions arise, answer those that have to do with the mechanics of filling out the forms, but refrain from interpreting any of the statements themselves. If anyone appears to be having trouble obtaining his or her test score, offer assistance. The entire procedure will take about thirty minutes. When everyone has finished, begin the discussion.

Post-Test Discussion. Reassure the participants of the confidential nature of both their responses to individual statements and their scores. Remind them that the tests are theirs to keep. They should also be assured that no one is trying to find out whether they smoke cigarettes. A discussion will often begin spontaneously, particularly in a group where the participants know each other. However, in a group that has been assembled for the purpose of filling out the Self Test and discussing cigarette smoking, it may be necessary to stimulate the discussion in the following ways:

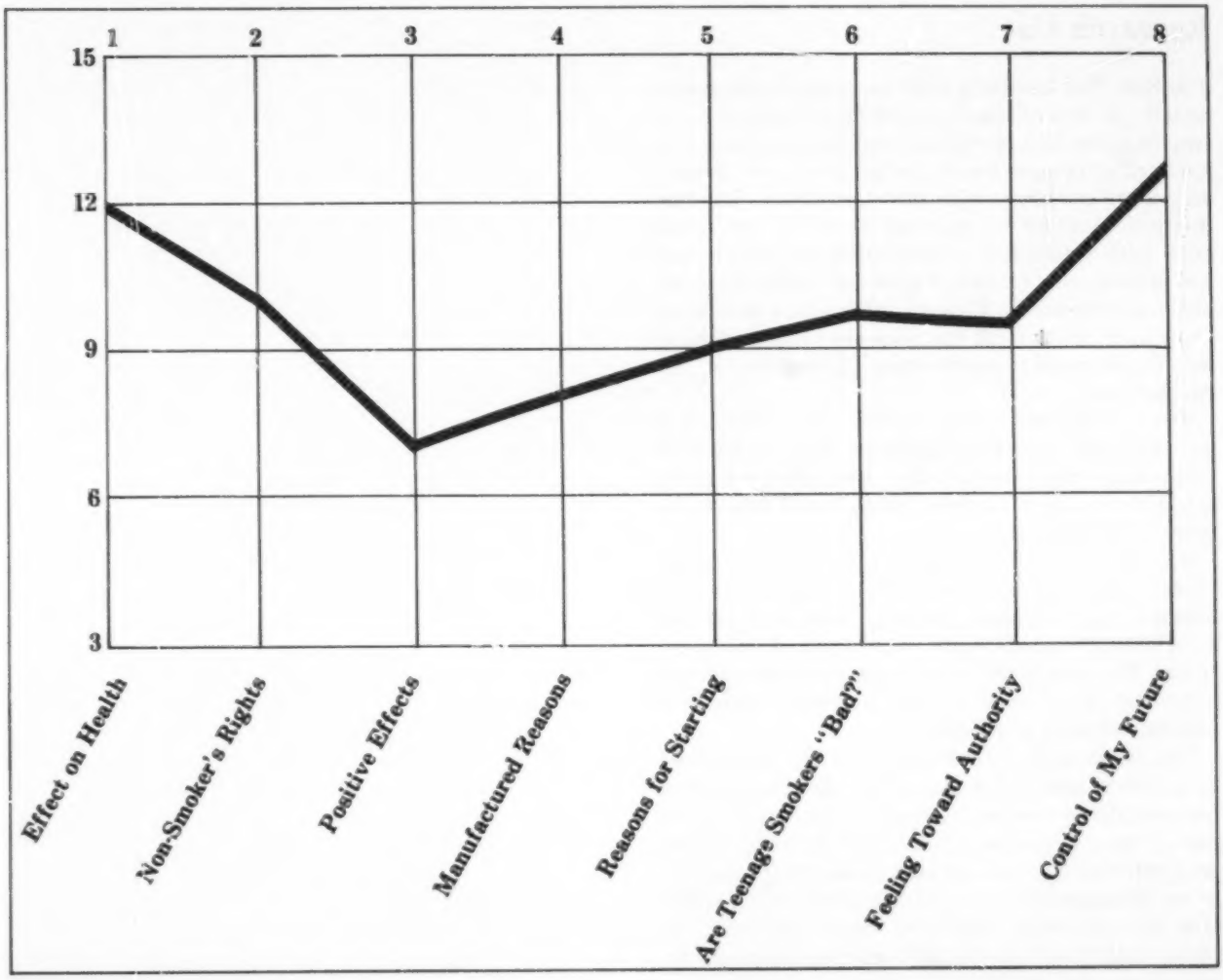
- Ask the participants what they think of the test. Was it interesting? Did you enjoy taking the test? Did you learn anything about smoking in doing so? What did you learn?
- Ask members of the group to suggest areas they are interested in discussing. Write these on the blackboard.
- Show the participants how to compare their scores with those of other teenagers nationwide, using the chart at right.

NOTE: Use the chart at right to show participants how to compare their scores with national norms. Remind them that, in making these comparisons, a high score is not "better" than a low score, as it usually is on tests. The purpose of comparing scores with national norms is to help the individual see how he or she stands on these issues in comparison with other teenagers. On the accompanying chart, a line has been drawn to connect the points where each average score falls. If a respondent's score is above this point, he or she is more in agreement with this concept than the average teenager. If it is below, he or she is less in agreement. On those scores where the average is very high (e.g., Scores 1 and 8), an individual's score may be below average but still basically in agreement.

After the discussion gets underway, try to keep it relevant to some aspect of teenage smoking. Be sure that a few members of the group do not monopolize the discussion. It is a good idea to try and draw out those who do not enter into the discussion, but they should not be forced to participate.

Before ending the session, you may want to lead the group to discuss one or more of the following questions, if they have not initiated the topic themselves:

- Why do you think a young person might begin to smoke? Or decide not to smoke?
- Do you think that social, emotional, and/or psychological factors have anything to do with the



fact that someone your age might or might not smoke?

- Why might concern for health keep some teenagers from smoking but not others?
- What are some of the benefits some young people may feel they obtain from smoking? Are these perceptions valid?
- What do you think cigarette smoking does for a person's self-image?
- What can a young person do when many of his best friends smoke and they are pressuring him to do the same, even if he really doesn't want to?
- If teenagers know cigarette smoking is bad for their health, why do they do it?
- Of the eight factors in the Self Test, which would most highly affect the chances of becoming an adult smoker?

At the close of the discussion, offer help in obtaining more information about the various aspects of smoking, including help in quitting smoking, for those who want it. Have handouts available for those who wish to pick them up (see Additional Resources at end of this booklet).

Research Use

The Self Test has been used for research purposes, usually as an evaluation instrument. Typically, the test is given before an antismoking program, and again after completion of the program, and pretest scores are compared with post-test scores. The test is a useful tool for this purpose since (1) it was developed with sound test construction procedures and has proved reliable, and (2) national norms are available for comparison. However, there are a number of ways in which the test has been used that may have led to erroneous conclusions. Therefore, a few caveats are in order.

First, if the statements are revised or changed in any way, the results are no longer comparable with national norms. Additionally, such changes could affect the factor structure, which would render the score uninterpretable.

Second, it is not possible to obtain a meaningful "total score" for these eight tests. The statements measure eight different factors, some of which are correlated positively with each other, some negatively. The sum of the score is no more indicative of a teenager's attitude toward smoking than is a number selected at random.

Finally, it is inappropriate to use the instrument as a pretest and a post-test where the time interval between the two administrations is short. For example, if the Self Test is given before an antismoking program, and then a week later at the end of the program, changes in scores may not necessarily mean that the students' attitudes have changed, but rather that they have learned what responses are acceptable to the teacher.

TEST 1.

These are statements that some teenagers have made about cigarette smoking and cigarette smokers. You may agree or disagree with these statements. After reading each statement, circle the number that shows how you feel about it.

Read each statement carefully before giving your answer.

Teenagers' Knowledge of Smoking	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree
A. Even though lung cancer and heart disease can be caused by other things, smoking cigarettes is still a significant factor in those diseases.	3	2	1
B. Cigarette smoke smells bad.	3	2	1
C. People smoke cigarettes to help them think more clearly.	3	2	1
D. It's okay for teenagers to experiment with cigarettes if they quit before it becomes a habit.	3	2	1
E. Cigarette smoking can harm the health of teenagers.	3	2	1
F. Cigarette smokers should be kept apart from nonsmokers in public places.	3	2	1
G. Smoking cigarettes can help you enjoy life more.	3	2	1
H. Cigarette smoking is harmful only if a person inhales.	3	2	1
I. Even if cigarettes don't kill you, they can cut down on what you might get out of life.	3	2	1
J. I prefer the company of girls who don't smoke.	3	2	1
K. People who smoke seem to be more at ease with others.	3	2	1
L. There is no danger in smoking cigars or pipes.	3	2	1
M. I believe the health information about smoking is true.	3	2	1
N. Cigarette smoking should be forbidden inside public places.	3	2	1
O. Smoking cigarettes gives you a good feeling.	3	2	1
P. Cigarettes low in tar and nicotine can't harm your health.	3	2	1
Q. There's nothing wrong with smoking cigarettes as long as you don't smoke too many.	1	2	3
R. If I smoke around other people, I take away their right to breathe clean air.	3	2	1
S. Smoking cigarettes seems to make good times even better.	3	2	1
T. Teenagers who smoke regularly can quit for good any time they like.	3	2	1

How to Score Your Test

1. Fill in the blanks with the numbers you have circled after each statement on the previous page. For example, put the number you circled after Statement A on line A.

2. Add the numbers in each column to get your totals. For example, the sum of the numbers you copied on lines A, E, I, M, and Q gives you your score for column 1.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T

Add Your Columns:

1	2	3	4

1. Effect of Smoking on Health

Your column 1 total: _____

Scores on this set of statements tell how much you know about the effects of cigarette smoking on individual health and how much you believe.

The average teenager scores 12, which indicates a high level of belief in the health hazards of smoking. If you scored 13 or above, you have learned about the harmful effects of smoking and are concerned about them.

If you scored between 9 and 12, you show concern about the health hazards, but slightly less than the average teenager. A score of less than 9 means you know little about the health hazards of smoking or you have not thought enough about them to have formed a strong opinion.

2. Nonsmokers' Rights

Your column 2 total: _____

There is a growing feeling that people who do not smoke have the right to breathe clean air that is not polluted with cigarette smoke. Your score on this series of questions indicates how sensitive you are to how other people feel about breathing cigarette smoke. The average score for all teenagers is 10; 12 is considered a high score—indicating a person who would rather not be around smokers and would like to see them kept apart from others in public places. If you scored below 6, you do not feel that cigarette smoke bothers nonsmokers.

3. Positive Effects of Smoking

Your column 3 total: _____

This set of questions looks at what people believe they get out of smoking a cigarette.

If your score is 12 or above, you believe that people benefit a great deal from smoking. The average teenager scores 7, which indicates that teenagers do not believe cigarettes contribute much to a person's enjoyment of life. A score of 6 or below shows that you do not see many positive aspects about cigarette smoking.

4. Manufactured Reasons for Smoking

Your column 4 total: _____

Most teenagers who smoke, although they believe that smoking is harmful to health, can find reasons for ignoring this fact. They try to make up reasons for overlooking the dangers of smoking, or pretend there are circumstances where there are no dangers in smoking. A high score, 12 or above, says "It can't happen to me," or "Here are the reasons it's all right for me to smoke now." On the other hand, though, a low score, 6 or below, indicates that you are not trying to pretend that it's all right to smoke.

The average score of all teenagers is only 7, indicating that most teenagers do not try to explain away the disadvantages of smoking. This is true for smokers and nonsmokers alike!

TEST 2.

These are statements that some teenagers have made about cigarette smoking and cigarette smokers. You may agree or disagree with these statements. After reading each statement, circle the number that shows how you feel about it.

Read each statement carefully before giving your answer.

Social Awareness and Self-Understanding	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree
A. Most teenagers start smoking cigarettes because most of their friends smoke.	3	2	1
B. Teenagers who smoke cigarettes are more likely to be troublemakers than those who don't.	3	2	1
C. I feel good knowing I can turn to my parents for advice.	3	2	1
D. Making something of my life is important to me.	3	2	1
E. Most teenagers start smoking cigarettes to try to attract friends of the opposite sex.	3	2	1
F. A person who smokes is more of a follower than one who doesn't smoke.	3	2	1
G. Adults try to stop teenagers from smoking just to show their power.	1	2	3
H. I use my own set of values to decide what I will or will not do.	3	2	1
I. Most teenagers start smoking cigarettes to try to become more popular.	3	2	1
J. Kids who smoke are show-offs.	3	2	1
K. It annoys me that my parents have so much control over things I want to do.	1	2	3
L. I don't want to get hooked on anything, including cigarettes.	3	2	1
M. If you don't smoke cigarettes, other teenagers put you down.	3	2	1
N. Teenage smokers think they are grown up, but they really aren't.	3	2	1
O. I wish I were older than I am now.	1	2	3
P. I can control the kind of person I will become.	3	2	1
Q. I am under pressure from my friends to smoke.	3	2	1
R. Teenage smokers think they look cool, but they don't really.	3	2	1
S. Teenagers should be able to do the things they want to do when they want to do them.	1	2	3
T. I do not want to be just one of the crowd.	3	2	1

How to Score Your Test

1. Fill in the blanks with the numbers you have circled after each statement on the previous page. For example, put the number you circled after Statement A on line A.

2. Add the numbers in each column to get your totals. For example, the sum of the numbers you copied on lines A, E, I, M, and Q gives you your score for column 5.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T

Add Your Columns:

5	6	7	8

5. Reasons for Starting

Your column 5 total: _____

Whatever the reasons teenagers actually have for starting to smoke, this score shows why you *think* they start the habit. Some base their opinions on what is shown in advertisements, which show the smoker as popular and attractive to the opposite sex.

If your score is high, 12, or above, you think that this is the true picture of the teenage smoker and you believe that smoking enhances social life.

6. Are Teenage Smokers "Bad"?

Your column 6 total: _____

If you scored high (12 or above) you are very critical of the teenage smoker. You agree with the idea that teenage smokers are show-offs, troublemakers, and faking how grown up they are. If you have a low score (6 or below), you do not believe these negative statements about smokers.

The average teenager has a score of 10. Those who smoke, as you would expect, have a lower score than nonsmokers.

7. Feeling Toward Authority

Your column 7 total: _____

This score indicates how teenagers feel about parents and others having authority.

The higher the score on this set, the more you like to turn to your parents for advice and support. If you have a low score, you want more independence—a *very* low score shows that you are rebelling against authority (6 or below). Thirteen is considered a high score; the average is 10. Smokers tend to score slightly lower, and nonsmokers slightly higher than average.

8. Can I Control My Future?

Your column 8 total: _____

Although most teenagers want to decide the kind of person they will become, and believe that they *can* accomplish what they strive for, some feel this more strongly than others. A score of 13 or more on this set of questions shows that it is important to you to control your own destiny, as opposed to being subject to good or bad luck. It also shows you believe you can exercise control over your future. The average teenager scores quite high—12—and there is little difference between smokers and nonsmokers.

What Do Other People Think About Smoking?

You have just taken two tests about cigarette smoking. You have figured out your scores and read what these scores measure.

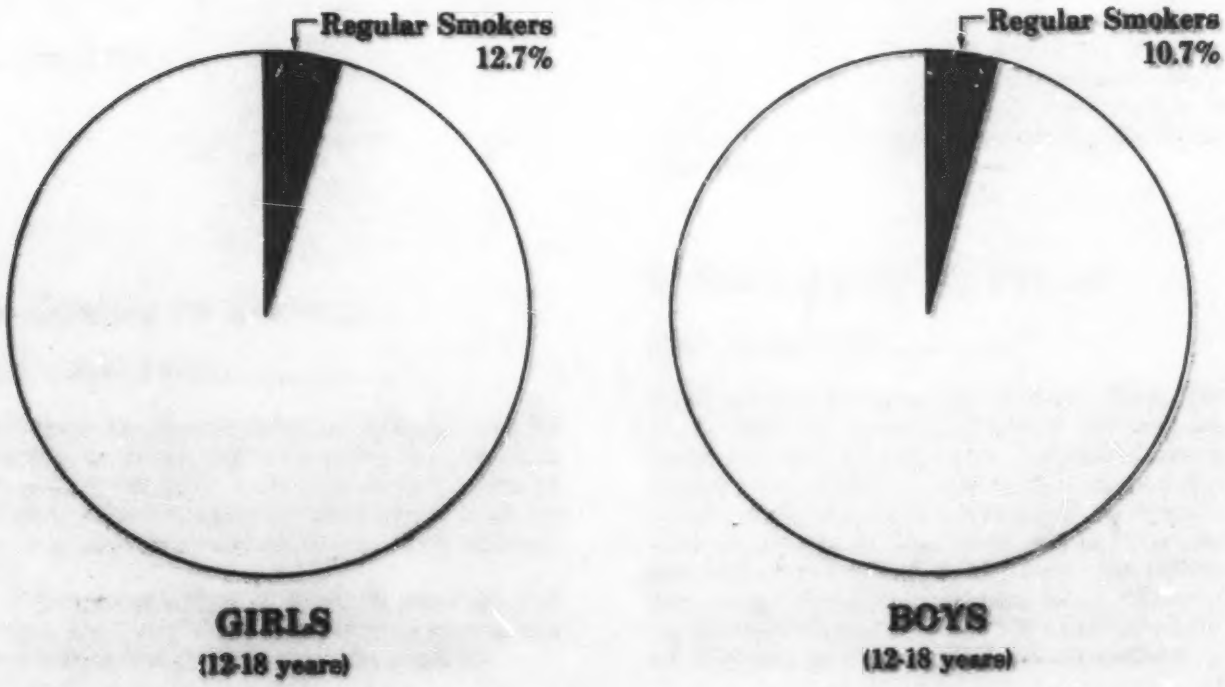
Now, what have you learned? Maybe nothing much now. Maybe you have learned that cigarette smoking isn't as grown up as some people would lead you to believe. At the very least, you have spent a few minutes thinking about the harm cigarettes can do to your health and to the health of your friends.

Over 7,000 teenagers helped develop these tests. Here is what they said about smoking:

- over 90 percent said that smoking is harmful;
- 72 percent admitted that smoking does not make them feel more grown up;
- 84 percent believe that smoking is habit forming;
- 77 percent agree it is better never to start than to try to give up the habit once it is formed.

It is important to remember that most teenagers do not smoke. Even by age 18, only one out of five boys and one out of four girls are regular smokers. This is the lowest percentage for boys in 30 years.

Percentages of Teenagers Who Smoke Regularly (1979)



What's So Bad About Smoking, Anyway?

All cigarette packages and advertisements must carry a warning label which says, "The Surgeon General Has Determined that Cigarette Smoking is Dangerous to Your Health." This warning is not put there just to scare you—it is supported by more than 30 years of medical research.

Smoking causes many kinds of disease. It causes emphysema and bronchitis (two lung diseases) and is a major risk factor for heart disease. It causes about 85 percent of all lung cancer, and causes other kinds of cancer as well. Smoking by a pregnant woman can harm the unborn baby and may cause the baby to be sick more often after it is born.

The three major components of cigarette smoke are nicotine, tar, and gases such as carbon monoxide. Nicotine is probably what makes smoking addictive, or habit forming. It causes the heart to work harder, increases blood pressure and narrows the air passages of the lungs.

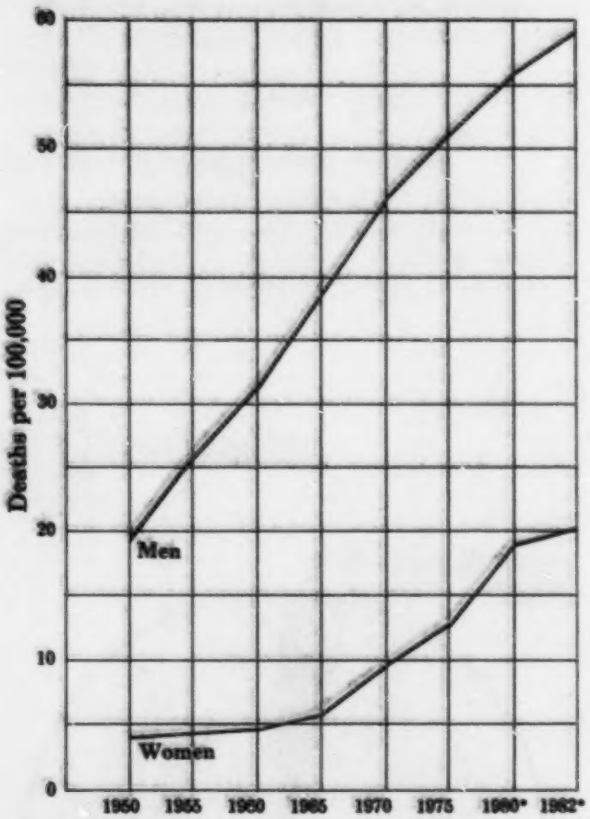
Tar is the substance in tobacco smoke that most likely causes cancer. It is composed of thousands of chemical compounds. Tar stains fingers, coats the bottom of ashtrays, clouds the insides of car windows, and stays on clothes.

Carbon monoxide interferes with the blood's ability to carry oxygen to the cells. Other gases in cigarette smoke do other harmful things. For example, gases in cigarette smoke can destroy the tiny, hairlike cilia that line the breathing passages. This allows tar and other harmful substances to accumulate in the lungs. Smokers often develop "smoker's cough" as the result of this.

Tobacco smoke contains many other harmful substances. Among them are acrolein, nitrogen oxide, ammonia, acetone, and hydrogen cyanide.

Cigarette smoking affects your health. It is also expensive—it costs about $300 to $500 a year to support a pack-a-day habit. In addition, cigarettes are the number one identifiable cause of death from home fires which cost thousands of lives and millions of dollars in property losses every year.

Lung Cancer Death Rates 1950-1982



*estimated

Up to 85 percent of lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking. The lung cancer death rate (number of deaths per 100,000 people) for men has doubled since 1950. The death rate for women has doubled since 1970, and lung cancer is only one of the diseases caused by smoking.

Additional Resources

Publications

Smoking and Health: An Annotated Bibliography; School Edition. National Cancer Institute, Office of Cancer Communications, Bethesda, MD 20205. 1979.

Smoking Programs for Youth. National Cancer Institute, Office of Cancer Communications, Bethesda, MD 20205. 1980.

Smoking, Tobacco & Health: a fact book. Office on Smoking and Health, Public Health Service, Rockville, MD 20857. 1981.

Organizations

American Cancer Society*
777 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

American Heart Association*
7320 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231

American Lung Association*
1740 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Office of Cancer Communications
National Cancer Institute
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, MD 20205

Office on Smoking and Health
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

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*Consult your local telephone directory for listings of local chapters.

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